

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1.—BEHAVIOUR OF HYENA AND PANTHER AT A 'KILL'

As it is asserted by many shikaris from experience—as well as by others without the experience—that a panther will not return to, or will not feed again on a kill visited by a hyena, also that the hyena will sometimes drive away the feeding panther, the following account of an incident may be of interest to the shikar fraternity, as well as to others. Actually the occasion was comprised of a series of varying incidents covering a period of about 2½ hours, with intervals brief and long. But the phase of greatest interest to myself was that during which I had, perforce, kept the scene illuminated by my electric torch for perhaps four minutes, with all the actors on the stage during that time.

The kill (a calf) was in the large bare compound of an unoccupied house. A public road and dwellings lay along the front of the compound, other houses and compounds with intervening walls lay adjacently to the first in one direction; the fourth side was open ground and ended at the brink of a cliff far away—the only direction in which to safely fire a heavy rifle, while the opposite side of a common intervening wall offered an ideal place for the 'gun'.

The kill was brought about 5 yards nearer (within 20 yards) and was not pegged down, as I hoped that the sound of the panther dragging away the carcass would warn me of its presence. As a pariah dog arrived just after dark, half a dozen stones were collected for such visitors.

About 11 p.m. a large hyena was discovered, backing away on its haunches with the carcass in its jaws and almost clear of the ground. It was driven away by a flung stone and the carcass brought back to its proper place. It returned after a few minutes (detected quite by chance), was subsequently joined by another and it was only by good luck that these two were detected from time to time approaching the carcass, for they were not readily driven away. During this phase, the behaviour of the large hyena indicated that the panther had, to his knowledge, arrived—somewhere in the dark background—and soon I saw its eyes, about 40 yards beyond the kill. They appeared there just after I had replaced the carcass for the second time.

I was now obliged to switch on my torch at frequent intervals, and thus discovered another panther's eyes somewhat farther off than the first and about 30 yards to one side. As the monsoon wind was blowing from behind me and towards the scene, with the panthers to leeward of the hyenas, I was curious to know whether the larger hyena could see those eyes in the artificial light as I could, or had he previously located their owner there, for he made frequent excursions in the general direction of the first panther. As their forms were invisible to me in the light of my 3-cell torch at that

range, I was never able to see this hyena again, nor saw his eyes, until he began to re-appear returning to the kill; so I could not tell exactly where he had been, for the eyes of both panthers remained stationary during each of these scoutings except the last one, when the eyes of the first panther moved lower to the ground and then disappeared.

Finally, both hyenas were closely about the kill, moving to and fro with nervous uncertainty under the brilliant shaft of light but obviously preparing to get busy with it, and in the background were the steady gleams from the eyes of both panthers. Standing up I expended all my stones and scared off the smaller hyena (? female). In desperation I hissed and 'shoo-ed' at the other; but only when I resorted to slapping my hand upon the wall loudly did he go away. Almost immediately after, and while the light was still on, the first panther began to approach. It came into the glare of the torch at a fast walk, to one side of the kill till abreast of it; then it turned towards it—giving a couple of glances directly into the light, with screwed up and blinking eyelids—and, when about 4 yards from the kill, was confronted by the larger hyena. The latter seemed to have materialised there suddenly, about the same short distance away—the two animals face to face. The panther hesitated, stopped, and turning away (towards the light) began retracing its steps at a slower pace. I retain no visual impression of any change in its demeanour or carriage at that moment, except perhaps that the high-held, alert head was slightly lowered—until it paused to look into the light again. It did not look back at the hyena.

About 1-30 a.m. the eyes of the other panther appeared, but now nearer. Unfortunately the heavy recoil of the rifle had disarranged the seating of the torch as well as the delicate contact mechanism, so that I had to reach forward with my right hand and hold the contact 'off'. When switched on again this panther had gone—for good. I feel that the behaviour of the hyenas and panthers in this affair was unusual—as extraordinary as that of the 'gun' was too.

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12th August 1947.

2.—THE SENSE OF SMELL IN TIGERS

Mr. R. C. Morris's comments on the note by Mr. T. E. H. Smith, in the April 1947 number of the *Journal* are of interest and his theory that the tiger has a hound sense of smell is borne out by the following incident.

In January 1936, I was camping in the foot-hills near here, and had three young buffaloes tied up as bait for tiger. One morning news was brought to camp that one of the buffaloes had been killed and was lying where it had been tied up at a junction of two forest rides.

I went out to the place, only to find that the tiger had in the meantime returned, broken the rope and dragged the carcass into